

This assumption may represent the most dangerous intelligence estimate and the safest tactical assumption in human history.

What is known is that Saddam Hussein controls tons of biological agents. What is known is that he is attempting to develop a nuclear explosive device, and while it is unlikely, it is conceivable he may control such a weapon today. Even if we assume our intelligence to be correct and his nuclear capacity is yet to be achieved, we can be sure he has a BW capacity, portable and hidden. We know he has the means of delivery.

Therefore, intervention assumes Saddam's delayed contemplation of BW usage. But what if Saddam is prepared to use BW immediately? What if he seeks wider Arab support by attempting to engage Israel? And what if Israeli leadership responds proportionately, perhaps disproportionately?

If biological agents are released in Haifa or Tel Aviv, the prospect of a nuclear response is not remote. American troops could be caught in the crossfire and crosswind of two sets of weapons of mass destruction coming from different sources, each equally dangerous. Is not the next 6–8 weeks the most dangerous in the history of the region?

Before any strike, it would seem to me the U.S. must know the location of every biological weapon cache in Iraq and have a clear plan and capacity to destroy or control these weapons within minutes of the initiation of military action. Absent that capability, military intervention would be based upon inadequate intelligence and a potentially catastrophic misjudgment of intent.

The risks are extraordinary. However, it is suggested that as large as the risks are today, they will be graver in subsequent years. Surely, it is said, we cannot allow Saddam's weapons of mass destruction to deter the United States from taking necessary action.

This line of argument has substantial merit. But it does not necessarily provide a compelling rationale to intervene today. The reason it doesn't is because of a lack of understanding of the danger of biological agents. Pounds or ounces of biological agents, such as plague or anthrax, can be devastating. Saddam Hussein controls tons. Given these quantities, adding more does not make him that much more dangerous.

While a shield may be technologically feasible to develop to shoot down a missile that leaves the earth's orbit, there is no such thing as a biological shield. Delivery systems can be rudimentary and multi-faceted.

The coming conflict with Iraq is not only symptomatic of the problem of terrorism but arguably stands as the most difficult confrontation in world history. If biological weapons through usage are legitimized as instruments of war, the survival of man is in desperate jeopardy. While the Middle East contains many conflicts rooted in differing approaches to faith, the Iraq issue is fundamentally different. It has far more to do with the conjunction of science and despotism than a clash of civilizations.

The reason the United States led the world community in the development of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in the 1970s to prevent the development, production, and stockpiling of biological weapons is that we came to the conclusion not only that the use of biological weapons could jeopardize society itself but we also decided that even ex-

perimenting with these weapons was too dangerous in the world's most sophisticated scientific community. It is a public health trauma of unprecedented proportions to stockpile these agents, let alone use them in war.

In this context, the case that Iraqi leadership is lawless is compelling. And the case for lawful regime change is real. But we are courting unprecedented danger to the American national interest and the existence of the state of Israel to move from a policy of containment and deterrence to a policy of military intervention that may actually precipitate usage of such horrendous weapons of mass destruction.

Based upon the mendacity of leadership in Iraq, it is hard not to provide our President with full discretionary support. The problem is that this resolution contemplates an act of war of unprecedented consequences. The logic of its words leads to consequences too awful to contemplate. I must vote no.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY), a member of the Committee on the Budget.

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, the September 11 attack claimed the lives of thousands of Americans, and dozens more have perished in our war against terrorism. Just yesterday, a U.S. Marine was killed in Kuwait by al Qaeda-trained terrorists. According to press reports, our Marine was killed in a supposedly secure area, and Kuwaiti authorities are baffled over how the terrorists were able to carry out their murder.

I bring up the death of this Marine because it should serve as a reminder that there are no guarantees in war. We must think through the consequences of a war in Iraq and get answers to our questions. Because if we do not ask the tough questions now, in a few short weeks, while Americans are comfortably at home doing their last-minute holiday shopping, hundreds of thousands of our troops are going to be deployed to another combat zone. That, in turn, makes each and every one of us taking part in this debate responsible for our national security and the welfare of our troops.

This vote is undoubtedly one of the most important that many of us will ever cast. This is not a vote on whether the President of the United States should be able to broaden our war against terrorism to include Saddam Hussein. It is a vote on whether now is the best time to attack, given that we do not yet have a new U.N. Security Council resolution or the support of our closest friends and allies in the international community. It is a vote on whether now is the best time to attack given that we have not used the full weight of our economic and diplomatic might to avert a war. It is a vote on whether we proceed with war when we have not determined what its objectives are, how long it will last, how much it will cost, or what kind of a regime will be set up afterwards.

This is not Desert Storm, where Iraq invaded Kuwait, where we had clear goals and the support of the inter-

national community, and we only paid about 10 percent of the cost of that war.

Mr. Speaker, I would not raise any of these questions if Congress had been informed that Iraq posed an imminent threat to the security of the United States. We have not received that information. And I have many more unanswered questions, such as: How will the war affect our economy? How will the war affect our homeland security? What happens to international cooperation in our hunt for terrorists? What happens if Iraq lashes out at Israel? Are we prepared to recast our military as an army of occupation for the entire Middle East?

I am raising these questions because they are the same ones posed to me every weekend back in Oregon. While there has been a lively debate on this resolution, it has been far from persuasive. Nobody seems to have the answers. And, trust me, I have tried, through briefings, through talking to experts, through going through classified materials. At this time, I cannot go home with a clear conscience and explain why I voted to broaden this war with so many questions left unanswered.

So I will oppose the resolution. And for those who have committed themselves to voting for this measure, please consider asking these tough questions. It is easier to ask questions before we go to war, not after we commit ourselves and our young people to battle. When we have received answers to our questions, and when we have received assurances that we have tried everything, and that the only way left to nullify Iraq's threat to our national security is military action, only then would I vote to use force.

We do not have the answers to the questions. We do not have those assurances, and so I will vote "no" and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD), a spokesperson really for justice.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in this historic debate with some trepidation and troubled feelings. I have been marshaling views, like many of my esteemed colleagues, not only to contribute to this dialogue but, more poignantly, to try to make sense of what lies ahead for our great country.

Each Member has been consumed with this very critical issue. I am sure that none of us wants a war, as we know its great cost in human capital. Therefore, we must go the extra mile necessary to exhaust all possibilities before America commits to force. That is why this debate is so critical. And the implications of our decision that follows will have such portent, not only for us but also for the parents of